

Policy on Privacy, Subpoenas and Search Warrants

The Pelham Library is committed to user confidentiality. The confidentiality of library records is a core part of library ethics and the Pelham Public Library follows the [Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](#).

Confidentiality and your library record

Under the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 78, Section 7 “That part of the records of a public library which reveals the identity and intellectual pursuits of a person using such library shall not be a public record...”

Confidentiality extends to information sought or received and materials consulted or borrowed, and includes database search records, reference interviews, circulation records, interlibrary loan transactions, registration records, and all other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities, or services. Circulation records are only maintained as long as our network stores them. The library keeps no record of internet sites visited, electronic databases used, or searches performed by patrons.

Circulation, registration information, and information retrieval records will not be disclosed except to the patron, those authorized by the patron, or representatives of any local, state, or federal government, pursuant to subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power. Upon receipt of any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with legal counsel to determine if the subpoena or search warrant is in proper form and if there is a valid basis for its issuance before providing confidential information. Some search warrants or subpoenas issued under the USA Patriot Act come with a "gag order" automatically attached, preventing staff from telling the patron or the public that information has been provided to the FBI.

The Library does not sell, lease, or otherwise distribute or disclose patron name, email address, postal address, telephone number, or other personal information to outside parties.